

Bridgewater News

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Mayor

PATRICIA FLANNERY

Township Council

MATT MOENCH

Council President

DAN HAYES

ALLEN KURDYLA

HOWARD NORGALIS

CHRIS ROSE

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www.bridgewaternj.gov

COUNCIL PRESIDENT MESSAGE

As we enter into the spring season, the Township Council undertakes its most arduous and important task – approving a budget. At a recent meeting, the Council introduced the proposed budget prepared by Mayor Flannery and the township administration. With the introduction of the budget, the Council now takes over primary responsibility for reviewing and approving a final budget for this fiscal year. Over the next several weeks, the Council will engage in a line-by-line review of the proposed budget. In addition, the Council will have the opportunity to directly address and question various township departments about their operations and expenses when each comes before the Council at a public meeting. I invite all township residents to attend these information meetings to learn more about our Township's finances, and the services offered by our Township. The proposed budget reflects the fiscal hardships faced by many

Council President (continued on back)

A Message From The Mayor

This year has presented the most difficult budget season in recent history. I support the steps the Governor has taken to reduce the budget deficit and trying to right the wayward course State government has taken over the last decade. On the local level we feel the pain of these unparalleled budget reductions most acutely.

The loss of \$1.9 million in State Aid represents a 25% reduction in this revenue. The term *State Aid* is a misnomer as the funds received from the State are a replacement for funds originally collected by the municipality from utilities, business personal property taxes, financial business taxes and railroad taxes among others. Years ago these revenues were given directly to each municipality. The State changed this formula by accepting the funds on behalf of the towns and redistributing it in the form of Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act and Energy Tax Receipts. Bridgewater has never been the recipient of true aid either in the form of 'extraordinary' or 'special' as have other municipalities.

In order to balance this loss we have taken steps to reduce our payroll through attrition and layoffs and negotiated a wage freeze with the majority of our employees. In addition we have reduced expenses and programs throughout the Township, thus I presented the Council with a budget that is \$1.15 million less than last year.

Unfortunately there will be some programs we can no longer pro-

vide due to cost cutting such as the bulky trash drop off. Check with your trash hauler as several companies that service Bridgewater residents will remove bulky trash from your curbside, free of charge. Most haulers charge a nominal fee for removal of bulky trash. For a current list of trash haulers servicing Bridgewater please contact the Township CFO at 725-6300 x5100.

I would like to pass on my appreciation to the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for the recent ceremony conducted at the Bridgewater Commons Mall. At this event local war veterans from all conflicts dating back to World War II through the present were honored for their service to our Country. This event was meant not only to honor our veterans and thank them but to help inform them of the many services and programs that are provided through the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs. If you know of anyone who has served in the military in need of assistance of any kind please refer them to this office at 732-937-6347 or their website at www.state.nj.us/military and they will be glad to assist.

Each household has received a census questionnaire asking for information. It is important to take a few minutes and answer the survey as Federal dollars are based on the population of a community. Let's be sure we get our share of our federal tax dollars returned to Bridgewater! In addition we can all help save money by filling out and returning the survey to avoid the

(continued on next page)

Mayor's message (continued)

costly expense of having a census worker follow-up with those households that have not responded. If you have any questions regarding the 2010 census please visit our website and click on the link to Census 2010 for information. Please do your part by completing the Census and sending it in.

The most recent storms serve as a reminder that in a serious weather event our police, fire, rescue and public works personnel are here to assist. If you require non-emergent assistance from municipal government you can call us at 908-722-4111 and press 8, during non business hours. These calls are answered by our dispatchers who may be handling emergency situations at the same time. Please be concise and have the details of your concern ready for their assistance when they come on the line. They will notify the appropriate department of your need.

SHADE TREE BOARD

With this being the planting season, here are some planting tips to help you enjoy your trees for years to come:

- Carry trees to be planted carefully
- Expose the root flare before planting.
- Dig the hole twice as wide and slightly shallower than the root ball.
- Water daily.
- Do not use fertilizers for the first year.
- Use organic mulches piled 3 inches or less. Do not make volcanoes!

Staking may be required, depending on the tree size.



We are continuing our efforts to raise funds through private donations to finance the construction of a wonderful monument depicting Bridgewater history at the municipal complex. The monument, designed as a semi-circular granite wall which will depict various highlights in Bridgewater's 250-year history, will serve as a gathering place and focal point for the newly renovated municipal complex. To date our fundraising efforts for the monument have been proceeding nicely and we have raised over \$40,000 towards the total \$100,000 project. It is our goal to complete fundraising by this summer. This includes large and small donations, from individuals to corporate sponsors. If you care about preserving our history and enhancing your own public facilities by contributing to this effort, please see our website (www.bridgewaternj.gov) for details and donation opportunities.

WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

Do you have an interest in local wildlife issues? The Wildlife Management Oversight Advisory Committee is currently seeking new members. The committee meets on at least a quarterly basis and coordinates with other municipal and county activities undertaken to control and foster protection for local wildlife. Interested applicants should contact Chris O. Poulsen, Director of Human Services, at health@bridgewaternj.gov. For further information on wildlife issues, review the committee's web page at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

ENGINEERING

Each year the Departments of Engineering and Public Works prepare a listing of potential capital improvement projects that have been ranked for consideration for funding. Because there are always many more projects worthy of funding than there is funding, each project is compared and ranked against all others. Road or drainage condition, amount of traffic or water damage, safety, and population served or impacted are some of the items considered.

This year, emphasis has been on major traffic arteries such as Foothill, Mountaintop, and Country Club roads, and on major drainage problems such as Eastbrook, Long Road, and Cuckholds Brook. Some roads will receive a less expensive seal coat, which is intended to extend the useful life of a road until more permanent improvements can be funded.

Because many drainage projects require complicated and time-consuming Department of Environmental Protection permits, current funding may include only a study and permit phase with funding to follow in a subsequent year, if the project permits have been received by then.

In Bradley Gardens and Finderne, efforts are underway to abate extraneous flows of clean water into the sanitary sewers. It is expensive to treat water that leaks into the sewer system, which takes up scarce capacity in the lines and treatment plant. Unfortunately, some of the extraneous flow is from drains and sump pumps that have been illegally connected to the sanitary sewer.

Finally, efforts will continue this year to construct new and repair old sidewalks. As always, the public is invited to submit projects for future consideration to the Engineering Department.

3RD ANNUAL GENERATIONS OF DANCE SENIOR SHOWCASE AND FUNDRAISING EVENT

The Bridgewater Roxies, our community's own Senior Dance Troupe, are again hosting a dance and talent showcase for the community. The program, *Generations of Dance*, was created two years ago in conjunction with the statewide Mayor's Wellness Campaign to showcase the efforts that Bridgewater seniors take to improve and maintain their health through the aerobic and creative movement of dance. This show is a two hour entertainment extravaganza designed to inspire residents of all ages to get active, perhaps by taking advantage of the programs offered at the Bridgewater Senior Center. All proceeds from this year's show will benefit the Steeple Chase Breast Care Center at the Somerset Medical Center. Raising funds for a local organization ded-

icated to the health and care of our own community is so important to the Roxies and all of the show's performers, some of whom are breast cancer survivors. This year's event includes dancers from the ages of 5 to 85 sharing the same stage and some of the same routines. The show is packed with a variety of performances; there is something for everyone to enjoy. This event is truly an experience that should not be missed.

The event will be held at the Bridgewater - Raritan High School on Sunday, May 2nd, 2010 at 2:00 pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$7 for children under 12 and seniors over 62. Tickets are available for purchase at the Senior Center and seating is limited. Call 908-725-8020 or 908-575-8021 for tickets.

RECREATION

The Summer Playground Program registration has begun. Don't miss out. The registration deadline is Tuesday, June 1, 2010. Please note that some sites reach maximum capacity before the deadline and may close with no guarantees of reopening or a waitlist to be taken. Registration forms are available online at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

Dates: Monday, July 12 to Friday, August 6

Cost: \$100 non-refundable

Locations: Van Holten (1st & 2nd graders)*
Bradley Gardens,
Eisenhower, Hillside
(3rd – 6th graders)*
Chimney Rock Park
(7th – 9th graders)*

*grades based upon the 2010-2011 School Year)

The Pee Wee Playground Program (formerly Pre-School Mini Day Camp) has some exciting changes for this summer. Registration has begun. This program is for children entering kindergarten in the school year 2010-2011 and will run for four days a week for four weeks. Space is limited so don't miss out. Registration forms are available online at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

Dates: Monday, July 12 to Thursday, August 5

Times: Two options – 8:30am to 11:00am or 12:00pm to 2:30pm

Location: Hamilton School

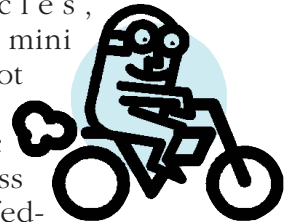
Both programs above are for Bridgewater residents only.

PLANNING AND LAND USE

The Bridgewater Planning Board invites members of the public to attend and participate in two meetings to be held in April in the Bridgewater municipal courtroom at 100 Commons Way. The first is a public hearing on the Bridgewater Township Master Plan Amendment of the Land Use and Economic Development elements. The focus is Route 22, and includes recommendations for future uses along this important corridor. This hearing will be held on April 13 beginning at 7:00 pm. The second meeting will be a presentation on the Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan at the Planning Board meeting of April 26 at 7:00 pm. The presentation will involve discussion of uses and potential capital projects for Township-owned open space.

SAFE MOTORING

Residents are reminded that all motorcycles, including mini bikes, cannot be operated on public streets unless they meet federal equipment standards, including but not limited to those for headlights, tail lights, horns, and mirrors. In addition, these same vehicles must be registered with a State motor vehicle agency, possess a current inspection sticker, and be insured. State laws that apply to motorcycles and mini bikes are created to protect you and those around you. To avoid receiving summonses for one or more of the above items, please ensure that your bike is legally and, more importantly, safely prepared for travel on public streets.



TAX ASSESSOR

The original deadline to file an appeal on your tax assessment was April 1, 2010 but has been pushed back to **May 1, 2010**. To obtain County appeal forms contact the Somerset County Tax Board at 908-541-5701. As the result of recently enacted legislation, local property tax appeals that are not

added or omitted assessments may be filed directly with the Tax Court if the original assessment exceeds \$1,000,000. Local property tax appeals for added and omitted assessments may be filed directly with the Tax Court if the original assessment (if any), plus the full added or omitted assessment before any monthly prora-

tion, exceeds \$750,000. The Tax Court's contact information is as follows: Tax Court Management Office, P.O. Box 972, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0972, Phone numbers: 609-292-5082 or 609-292-6989. As always, feel free to contact the tax assessor at assessor@bridgewaternj.gov or at 908-725-6300 ext. 5120

Council President (continued)

local municipalities and school districts. Rising health care costs, salaries, and reductions in state aide have formed a "perfect storm," resulting in significant tax increases and reductions in service for many municipalities. Here in Bridgewater, however, we are determined to make sure that our residents do not bear the brunt of that storm and we are determined not to simply pass on the cost to the taxpayers, and the proposed budget represents that effort. The Council will now review the budget to ensure that we have left no stone unturned and that every possible responsible cost cutting measure has been implemented so our residents can continue to enjoy quality municipal services at the lowest possible cost.

Should any resident have any questions regarding our municipal budget I encourage you to attend a Council meeting or contact me at mmoench@bridgewaternj.gov.

E-NEWS

A limited number of paper copies of this newsletter have been made available at locations throughout the Township. To receive future copies and other relevant news items by email, please forward your name, address, and email address to newsletter@bridgewaternj.gov.

HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Bridgewater Township is currently accepting applications from low and moderate income families for purchase of affordable housing condominiums. Units contain one, two, or three bedrooms and are located in the following developments:

Beacon Hill
Bridgewater Oaks
Bridle Club
CrossRoads
Glenbrooke
Loft Farms
Stratford Place
Stratton Meadows
Vanderhaven Farms

Both low and moderate income units are available and are based on the following maximum income amounts:

Family Size	Low Income	Moderate Income
1	\$35,035	\$56,056
2	\$40,040	\$64,064
3	\$45,045	\$72,072
4	\$50,054	\$80,080
5	\$54,054	\$86,486
6	\$58,058	\$92,893



If you are interested and are income eligible, please call the Housing Office at 908-725-6300 ext. 5245 for more information or an application. Applications are also available on our website at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

BE WATER WISE

The Township has teamed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program to help consumers save water for future generations and reduce costs on their utility bills. The average home, retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, can save 30,000 gallons per year. If one out of every 10 homes in the United States upgraded to water-efficient fixtures, it could save more than 300 billion gallons and nearly \$2 billion annually.

The goal of the EPA's WaterSense program is to help Americans save

water and money by offering simple ways to reduce water use through water-efficient product choices. The Bridgewater Environmental Commission looks forward to working with the community to improve water efficiency awareness and promote WaterSense labeled products and water-saving practices inside and outside the home.

For more information on WaterSense, and for a full list of labeled products and WaterSense irrigation partners, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.